



MONTGOMERY COUNTY GOVERNMENT

**DOMESTIC VIOLENCE
COORDINATING COUNCIL**

2022 ANNUAL REPORT

MISSION:

To reduce the incidence of domestic violence and create a safe community for families to live free of abuse.

September 15, 2022

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DVCC MEMBERSHIP EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS

DEBBIE FEINSTEIN
CHAIR, DVCC

ASSISTANT STATE'S ATTORNEY
FOR **JOHN MCCARTHY**

MONTGOMERY COUNTY STATE'S ATTORNEY
MONTGOMERY COUNTY STATE'S ATTORNEY'S OFFICE

THOMAS MANION
VICE CHAIR, DVCC

DIRECTOR, FAMILY JUSTICE CENTER
FOR SHERIFF **DARREN POPKIN**

MONTGOMERY COUNTY OFFICE OF THE SHERIFF

NICOLE DREW
COMMISSIONER

FOR **JODI FINKELSTEIN**, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
MONTGOMERY COUNTY COMMISSION FOR WOMEN

THE HONORABLE **KAREN FERRETTI**
ASSOCIATE JUDGE

FOR THE HONORABLE **SHERRI KOCH**
ADMINISTRATIVE JUDGE

DISTRICT COURT OF MARYLAND FOR
MONTGOMERY COUNTY

INGRID GONZALEZ
FIELD SUPERVISOR II

DIVISION OF PAROLE AND PROBATION
MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY
AND CORRECTIONAL SERVICES

THE HONORABLE **LYNNE HARRIS**
BOARD MEMBER

FOR THE HONORABLE **BRENDA WOLFF**
PRESIDENT, BOARD OF EDUCATION
MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

DORNÉ HILL

ADMINISTRATOR, TRAUMA SERVICES
FOR **RAYMOND L. CROWEL**, DIRECTOR
MONTGOMERY COUNTY
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

THE HONORABLE **SIDNEY KATZ**
MONTGOMERY COUNTY COUNCIL

TINA MICHAELS
RECORDS MANAGER

FOR **ANGELA TALLEY**, DIRECTOR
MONTGOMERY COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF
CORRECTION AND REHABILITATION

DINESH PATIL
ASSISTANT CHIEF

FOR **MARCUS JONES**, CHIEF
MONTGOMERY COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF POLICE

THE HONORABLE **KARLA SMITH**
ASSOCIATE JUDGE
FOR THE HONORABLE **JAMES BONIFANT**
ADMINISTRATIVE JUDGE
MONTGOMERY COUNTY CIRCUIT COURT

PUBLIC MEMBERS

CARISSA ZHENG
STUDENT MEMBER

MICHELLE MAXBERRY
COMMUNITY MEMBER

MINDY THIEL
COMMUNITY MEMBER

MAURA LYNCH
COMMUNITY MEMBER

AMY PALUMBO
COMMUNITY MEMBER

LAVONTTE CHAPMON
COMMUNITY MEMBER

JESSICA VOLZ
ADVENTIST HEALTH CARE

VACANT
NON-PROFIT MEMBER

STAFF

SMITA VARIA
PROGRAM MANAGER

MONTGOMERY COUNTY OFFICE OF THE SHERIFF

COUNCIL INFORMATION**TERM OF SERVICE**

There are nineteen voting members of the Domestic Violence Coordinating Council (DVCC) who serve without compensation and are appointed by the County Executive and confirmed by the County Council. Five are Ex-Officio members who serve at the request of the County Council: the Administrative Judge of the Circuit Court; the Administrative Judge of the District Court; the Sheriff; the State's Attorney; and the Regional Administrator for the Maryland Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services. There are six Ex-Officio members who are appointed by the County Executive: a member of the County Council selected by the Council President; the Directors of the Montgomery County Departments of Correction and Rehabilitation; Health and Human Services; and Police; the Executive Director of the Montgomery County Commission for Women; and the President of the Board of Education for Montgomery County Public Schools. In addition, there are five members of the general public appointed by the County Executive for renewable three-year terms, at least one of whom must be an attorney representing domestic violence victims, and at least one of whom must be a survivor of domestic violence. In 2010, the DVCC's code pertaining to membership was amended to add a student member. The student member is a high school student who is appointed to serve a one-year term that can be renewed for one additional year. In 2019, the DVCC's code pertaining to membership was again amended to add two representatives from non-governmental domestic violence service or advocacy organizations serving County residents.

SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS

The DVCC meets bi-monthly on the second Thursday of the month and has met eighty-eight times since September 2006. Meetings are open to the public.

LEADERSHIP

The DVCC Chair and Vice Chair are elected by members via majority vote and serve two-year terms. The Chair of the DVCC is Debbie Feinstein, Assistant State's Attorney; the Vice-Chair is Thomas Manion, Director of the Family Justice Center.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In the sixteenth year since its creation, the Domestic Violence Coordinating Council (DVCC) has advanced its mission of reducing the incidence of domestic violence and creating a safe community where families are free of abuse. In 2021-2022, the four committees—Victim Services, Education and Outreach, Legislative and Policy Planning, and Offender Program and Policy—identified focus areas and made progress on executing recommendations from the previous report. This report summarizes the accomplishments of the past year and makes recommendations for the next year.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- The Victim Services Committee requested a report from the Montgomery County Office of Legislative Oversight to publish a report on all available services for victims of power-based violence in Montgomery County;
- The Victim Services Committee collaborated with the Safe Start Program by Chesapeake Counseling to offer free summer activities that incorporated therapeutic elements for children who witness domestic violence;
- The Education and Outreach Committee presented the Choose Respect Montgomery Dating Violence Prevention workshop, “Expect Respect,” to 4,638 youth in 25 Montgomery County Public Schools and private schools;
- The Education and Outreach Committee coordinated the 13th Annual Choose Respect Montgomery Video Contest and received 346 entries;
- The Education and Outreach Committee continued promoting the Programs for Athletes to various youth sports teams;
- The Education and Outreach Committee coordinated RespectFest, the annual Choose Respect event, virtually and in person where over 2,000 people engaged in content and activities;
- The Education and Outreach Committee distributed over 20,000 Family Violence Awareness Cards throughout the County;
- The Education and Outreach Committee recognized Domestic Violence Awareness Month with the County Executive, Montgomery County Council, and the Montgomery County Board of Education;
- The Legislative and Policy Planning Committee carefully monitored domestic violence-related legislation that was proposed during the 2022 legislative session in the Maryland General Assembly.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR 2022 - 2023

- The Victim Services Committee recommends continuing to meet and collaborate with local government entities through its power-based violence subcommittee in an effort to address the needs of victims of all types of family and sexual violence;
- The Victim Services Committee recommends continued implementation and expansion of the Safe Start Summer Camp Program through collaborations with Chesapeake Counseling Associates, Bar-T, and other stakeholders;
- The Victim Services Committee recommends continued partnership with ACCESS to Behavioral Health to provide assistance to victims of domestic violence who are also experiencing challenges related to addiction;
- The Education and Outreach Committee recommends continued collaboration with county agencies, community organizations, and schools to increase awareness and prevention of teen dating violence through an annual event, the video contest, presentations at area schools, and programs for athletes and other youth organizations;
- The Education and Outreach Committee recommends continued partnerships with other agencies and organizations to outreach to the community to ensure the public knows about services available;
- The Education and Outreach Committee recommends continuing to raise awareness of Domestic Violence Awareness Month with public events;
- The Legislative and Policy Planning Committee recommends ongoing collaboration with the Office of Intergovernmental Relations, the Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence and the Maryland Coalition Against Sexual Assault to monitor and promote legislation that supports the mission of the DVCC;
- The Offender Program and Policy Committee recommends ongoing collaboration with the Department of Health and Human services and the Department of Correction and Rehabilitation to expand the Abuser Intervention Program.

VICTIM SERVICES COMMITTEE

CHAIR: THOMAS MANION

The Victim Services Committee is focused on assessing current programs, systems, and procedures related to domestic violence victim services, especially those collaborative services available at the Montgomery County Family Justice Center (FJC) that keep victims safe, hold offenders accountable, and break down barriers to long-term sustainability. The Committee has been collaborating actively with Montgomery County FJC allied agencies and other stakeholders to identify potential gaps in these efforts and/or areas of improvement. When necessary and appropriate, the Committee also seeks funding to offset the costs of any proposed recommendations. Furthermore, the Committee is focused on developing and maintaining collaborative partnerships to ensure that survivors in the community receive the best possible services at such a critical time. Primary objectives successfully achieved in the previous year are outlined below, as well as recommendations for the coming year.

FAMILY JUSTICE CENTER



The Victim Services Committee identified that many victims of intimate partner violence who come through the FJC are also victims of, or otherwise exposed to, other types of family and sexual violence such as child abuse, sexual assault, elder abuse and human trafficking. Many FJCs across the country are beginning to utilize the same collaborative framework to address all types of power-based violence, as well as other types of family and sexual violence individually.

The Victim Services Committee created a targeted subcommittee with a mission to transform victim services in Montgomery County by utilizing an innovative, multi-disciplinary, trauma-informed approach to meet the needs of victims of power-based violence across the life span in 2021 and is continuing to meet.

The vision for this subcommittee is to leverage existing resources and expertise to create one safe place where victims of power-based violence can access first-rate care and wrap-around supports from a variety of service providers; to create seamless collaboration between public and private allied agencies through shared planning, decision-making and accountability; and to break the cycle of power-based violence by providing services to entire families.

In conjunction with this subcommittee, the Victim Services Committee and Councilmember Sidney Katz requested the Montgomery County Office of Legislative Oversight to research all of the services for victims of power-based violence in Montgomery County. The report was released on May 3, 2022 and is available online at www.montgomerycountymd.gov/OLO/Resources/Files/2022_reports/OLO2022-6.pdf.

RECOMMENDATION: The Victim Services Committee recommends continuing to meet and collaborate with local government entities through the power-based violence subcommittee in an effort to address the needs of victims of all types of family and sexual violence.

SAFE START SUMMER CAMP

The Victim Services Committee worked with Chesapeake Counseling Associates, LLC, which runs the Montgomery County Safe Start Program for children who witness domestic violence, and Bar-T to launch the first Safe Start Summer Camp during the summer of 2019. Unfortunately, because of the COVID-19 health crisis, this program could not have been



duplicated during the summer of 2020, 2021 and 2022.

However, the Safe Start therapists were able to supply art supplies to children enrolled in Safe Start and were able to host arts and crafts activities with a therapeutic component through an online platform throughout the summer.

Although the children were not able to have a full camp experience, they were still able to connect with their therapists and continue their healing process.

RECOMMENDATION: The Victim Services Committee recommends continued implementation and expansion of the Safe Start Summer Camp Program through collaborations with Chesapeake Counseling Associates, Bar-T, and other stakeholders.

ADDICTION SUPPORT SERVICES

According to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, "research indicates that women who abuse alcohol and other drugs are more likely to become victims of domestic violence and that victims of domestic violence are more likely to receive prescriptions for and become dependent on tranquilizers, sedatives, stimulants, and painkillers and are more likely to abuse alcohol."

The Victim Services Committee has been working with the Montgomery County Mental Health/Substance Abuse Screening and Referral program (also known as ACCESS to Behavioral Health). They are working to create a referral program for clients at the Family Justice Center to receive services at ACCESS to Behavioral Health.

RECOMMENDATION: The Victim Services Committee recommends continued partnership with ACCESS to Behavioral Health in the next fiscal year to provide assistance to victims of domestic violence who are also experiencing challenges related to addiction.

EDUCATION AND OUTREACH COMMITTEE

CHAIR: DEBBIE FEINSTEIN

The Education and Outreach Committee continued to focus on domestic violence prevention this year. The teen dating violence prevention initiative, titled Choose Respect Montgomery, includes four primary programs: a teen dating violence workshop, “Expect Respect,” which is presented to middle and high schools in the County; programs for athletes to build a culture of respect, an annual event for teens, their parents, educators, and youth service providers; and a public service announcement video contest for teens. This year, the Committee promoted Domestic Violence Awareness Month in October 2021, held RespectFest virtually and in person, and distributed awareness materials on family violence prevention services. Highlights from each of these activities, as well as recommendations for the future, are listed below.

CHOOSE RESPECT MONTGOMERY: **EXPECT RESPECT**

Expect Respect is an in-class presentation for students in middle and high school. The flagship Expect Respect workshop is a 45-minute interactive program that teaches young people in 8th through 12th grades about dating violence, provides opportunities for



student involvement and features brief videos on various dating abuse topics such as verbal abuse, abuse through technology, consent, and how to intervene as a responsible witness. Local resources and national teen dating abuse help lines and websites are also discussed. This year, the program expanded to include workshops for 6th graders on healthy friendships, bullying and bystander intervention and for 7th graders on healthy and unhealthy friendships and relationships with a focus on emotional abuse.

Expect Respect is offered at no cost and is available in English and Spanish. Presentation requests are received at the Sheriff’s Office from various school personnel, including health teachers, counselors, and school principals; and from community organizations, including youth groups and religious organizations. Representatives of the Montgomery County State’s Attorney’s Office, the Montgomery County Sheriff’s Office, and Chesapeake Counseling Associates facilitate the Expect Respect presentations.

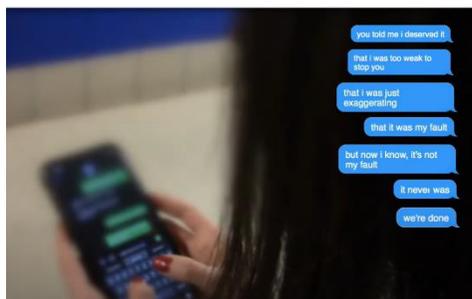
This year, facilitators gave 150 Expect Respect presentations to 4,639 young people at 25 schools.

CHOOSE RESPECT MONTGOMERY: PROGRAMS FOR ATHLETES

Choose Respect Montgomery wants to create a culture of respect among teens. To help, Choose Respect Montgomery helps athletic teams facilitate two nationally recognized programs for athletes to learn about leadership, respect, and conflict resolution. Futures Without Violence has a program entitled Coaching Boys Into Men (CBIM). CBIM is a free toolkit that utilizes the unique and important role that coaches play in the lives of male-identified youth. These comprehensive tools assist coaches in planning important discussions with athletes about respect for women and girls, and that violence does not equal strength. Through CBIM, male-identified athletes learn skills to avoid violence and abuse in their relationships. Athletes as Leaders is a similar program for female-identified athletes. This program aims to empower female-identified youth to take an active role in promoting healthy relationships and ending sexual violence. Athletes are encouraged to be leaders in creating a culture of safety and respect at their school.

Due to schools adjusting back to in-person school and the constraints on school staff, only Rockville High School implemented Coaching Boys into Men with their football team.

CHOOSE RESPECT MONTGOMERY: VIDEO CONTEST



1ST PLACE
“NOT MY FAULT”

For the thirteenth consecutive year, the DVCC coordinated a Public Service Announcement (PSA) Video Contest for local teens in middle and high school. This contest raises teens’ awareness on the issue of teen dating violence, both through the creation of the PSAs, as well as the distribution of the finished PSAs on social media, YouTube, and in schools. Participants were challenged to create a 60-second video addressing either physical abuse, emotional/verbal abuse, types of technological abuse, financial abuse, issues around

consent, examples of healthy behaviors in a relationship or bystander intervention. Students were also asked to include the phone number for the Family Justice Center. This year, all participants who followed the rules of the contest received 10 student service learning (SSL) hours. Participants submitted 346 entries (by 574 students) from 59 different schools. This year’s winner, announced at RespectFest on March 27, 2022, was “Not My Fault” by students at Roberto Clemente Middle School. Along with the winners chosen by a panel of judges (\$1,000 for first prize, \$750 for second, \$500 for third, and gift cards for two honorable mentions), 16,000 students from around the county viewed and voted on a “fan favorite” video, which won \$500. The Fan Favorite was awarded to “High School

Simulator” by students at Albert Einstein High School. The award money was provided by the Montgomery County Family Justice Center Foundation. To view all of the winning videos, please visit <https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/fjc/chooserespect/video.html>.

The DVCC will launch the 2023 contest in the Fall of 2022. Entries will be accepted in English and Spanish, and cash prizes will be awarded to the 1st, 2nd and 3rd place winners at RespectFest in the Spring of 2023.

CHOOSE RESPECT MONTGOMERY: **RESPECTFEST**

RespectFest took place virtually from March 21st – March 25th and in person on March 27th. During the week of virtual events people could attend workshops via zoom such as the opening webinar with a keynote speaker sharing her story of dating violence while in high school, Dating Violence Jeopardy for High School students, a workshop for middle school students, and a workshop for parents.

In addition, students could also engage in the content on their own time with various online activities that addressed bystander intervention, healthy and unhealthy relationships, warning signs, how to be an ally, teen dating violence 101, consent, technology abuse and a scenarios quiz. Students were also able to learn about different topics through the daily social media posts on Instagram, Twitter and Facebook.

On March 27th, the in person festival was held at the Wheaton Community Recreation Center. Over 600 participants attended. There were educational learning booths with activities addressing dating violence, how to help a friend, consent, technology abuse and how to talk to your child in addition to self defense and yoga classes. These booths were



led by the One Love Foundation, the Commission for Women, the Maryland Coalition Against Sexual Assault, the Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence and the Jewish Coalition Against Domestic Abuse. Students could earn student service learning hours if they engaged with these booths. There were also performances from a marching band, singing and dancing groups from area schools and the Department of Recreation. Participants could also visit the over 25 organizations that participated in the resource fair, get food from two food trucks and enter the raffle contest.

RespectFest was a collaboration of partnerships with the DVCC, Montgomery County Public Schools, Montgomery County Department of Recreation, Montgomery County Parks, Breathe In, Speak Out and with generous funding from the Montgomery County Family Justice Center Foundation, Pepco and CAVA.

PROMOTION OF AWARENESS MONTHS

To bring attention to Domestic Violence Awareness Month in October 2021, the Education and Outreach Committee planned several events throughout the month. There was a press event with State and County Officials, the Montgomery County Board of Education, and 2 survivor speakers who shared their stories. There was also a demonstration of the “Breathe In, Speak Out” yoga fundraiser which raised over \$1,000 for Choose Respect programming through two live streamed yoga classes. The Committee also asked the County Executive and County Council to present a Proclamation for Domestic Violence Awareness Month. The DVCC also hosted 2 educational webinars on bystander intervention and non-fatal strangulation. The month concluded with a live virtual panel of 4 survivor speakers.

RECOMMENDATION: The Education and Outreach Committee recommends continuing to raise awareness of Domestic Violence Awareness Month with public events.

LEGISLATIVE AND POLICY PLANNING COMMITTEE

CHAIR: MAURA LYNCH

The Legislative and Policy Planning Committee focused this year on supporting certain domestic violence-related legislation in the state of Maryland. Below is a summary of supported legislation as well as the committee's recommendation for the coming year.

PASSED

SB17/HB561 - Child Custody - Cases Involving Child Abuse or Domestic Violence - Training for Judges

Requiring training for judges regarding domestic violence and child abuse, including regarding child sexual abuse and investigations.

Most of the Bill will be enacted on July 1, 2022, excluding one section that will be enacted by July 1, 2024

HB148/SB328 - Criminal Law - Stalking – Definition

A bill to improve Maryland's stalking law by adding tracking without consent (for instance via stalkerware on a phone) and other electronic communication to the criminal stalking statute. Modifying the stalking statute will also permit peace and protective orders to be issued based on this conduct.

Bill will be enacted on October 1, 2022

SB20/HB284 - Criminal Procedure - Out of Court Statements - Child Victims and Witnesses

Expands the tender years exception to the hearsay rule to include alleged victims and witnesses of crimes of violence who are under 13 years old. This is a major expansion of this rule.

Bill will be enacted on October 1, 2022

HB817 - Criminal Law – Violation of a Protective Order – Merger Prohibition and Separate Sentence Authorization

Clarifying that the charges of violating a protective order and assault do not merge and may be sentenced separately.

Bill will be enacted on October 1, 2022

HB296/SB280 - Temporary Protective Orders - Electronic Filing and Video Conferencing Hearings

A bill permitting virtual proceedings for filing and hearing of temporary protective order petitions when the petitioner is at a sexual assault or domestic violence program, a child advocacy center, a vulnerable adult program, a human trafficking program, or in a hospital receiving medical treatment, or in any other location approved by the Court.

Bill will be enacted on October 1, 2022

HB210 - Criminal Trials - Spousal Privilege - Exception

This bill eliminates spousal privilege when the case involves a crime that happened prior to the marriage.

Bill will be enacted on October 1, 2022

RECOMMENDATION: The Legislative and Policy Planning Committee recommends ongoing collaboration with the Office of Intergovernmental Relations, the Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence and the Maryland Coalition Against Sexual Assault to monitor and promote legislation that supports the mission of the DVCC.

OFFENDER PROGRAM AND POLICY COMMITTEE

CHAIR: TINA MICHAELS

The Offender Program and Policy Committee includes members from Montgomery County and Maryland State agencies that focus on domestic violence offender intervention. Committee members focus on evaluating offender programs within their individual departments and identifying collaborative opportunities to improve communication and offender services as a whole. The details of the committee's departmental and system review as well as recommendations for improvement are outlined below.

ABUSER INTERVENTION PROGRAMS

The Offender Program and Policy Committee is continuing to work on initiatives to expand the Abuser Intervention Program (AIP). The AIP program is a 22-week group therapy program for individuals who are abusive to their intimate partners and who have been court-ordered to participate. Participants learn to take responsibility for their actions and to communicate more effectively.

Currently, this program is available to protective order respondents, and defendants who are supervised by Pre-trial services or on probation. Since last year, the Offender Program and Policy Committee has been exploring the possibility of offering the program to those that are currently incarcerated in the county's jails on domestic violence charges. These are offenders who would greatly benefit from this program. However, because of the COVID-19 Health Crisis, programs offered in detention centers have been slowly restarting again. Once operations return to regular status, the Offender Program and Policy Committee will resume working with the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation to offer the Abuser Intervention Program.

RECOMMENDATION: The Offender Program and Policy Committee recommends ongoing collaboration with the Department of Health and Human services and the Department of Correction and Rehabilitation to expand the Abuser Intervention Program.

SUMMARY

Through the services provided by the FJC, the monitoring of domestic violence policy, and the implementation of numerous domestic violence prevention initiatives, the Domestic Violence Coordinating Council (DVCC) continues to play an active and critical role in creating a safe community for families to live free of abuse. These activities and programs would not be possible without the support of DVCC agency partners, community groups and the Montgomery County Family Justice Center Foundation. In the coming year, the DVCC will continue to promote and expand existing initiatives and services as well as explore new, innovative strategies to reduce the incidence of domestic violence in Montgomery County.



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